

Saints and Networks in Late Antique North Africa

Call for Papers: International Medieval Congress (Leeds 3-6th July 2023)

Networks played an important role for the veneration of saints in Late Antique North Africa happening on different levels amidst the combination of continuity and change that characterised its various conquests by Vandals, Byzantines and later Arabs. The accounts of the saints did not emerge in a vacuum; rather, they were shaped by local influences and broader historical events. In addition, hagiographies were always written with a certain intention, which reflected contemporary problems as well as not uncommonly establishing intertextual references to other *passiones*. Religious or cultic networks were created through the exchange of congregations and clerics - not to mention the trade in relics. The networks that emerged from the veneration itself can rather be described as social networks that focused on communication between clergy, congregations and pilgrims. For example, it was through such a religious network that the relics of Saint Stephen reached North Africa. This, together with the marketing of the event, especially by Augustine of Hippo, led to a veritable upsurge of miracle reports - also in the histories of the saints - in the fifth century.

Studies of networks of saints and martyrs in Late Antiquity have often focused on the translation of holy relics and development of local and international cults, often to the disadvantage of other subjects, such as sectarian, ecclesiastic and inter-religious conflicts. We would like to encourage a full examination of the complex phenomenon of networks and the veneration of saints in North Africa. Therefore, we are accepting abstracts for a range of panels that explore saints and networks in any aspect of the region's history between Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Networks and connections within and between martyrologies and hagiographies
- Saints travelling across North Africa and surrounding worlds
- Audiences of martyr-saints
- Clerical networks (trading texts and relics)
- Travelling for faith – pilgrimage, exile

Abstracts should be around 100-150 words and should be sent to Alice van den Bosch (av365@exeter.ac.uk) and Nathalie Klinck (nathalie.klinck@uni-hamburg.de) along with a title, name and a short bio by **Friday September 9th**. If there are any questions about this strand, please do not hesitate to get in touch.